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ABSTRACT

The concept of full inclusion challenges school districts to include all students, regardless of the type or degree of disabling conditions, in regular classrooms at their neighborhood schools. This Bulletin examines some of the concerns that inclusion raises. Its summary of national research and interviews with 14 Oregon educators provide guidelines for effective practice. The introduction provides a brief history of the impetus for inclusion and describes the Oregon perspective. Chapter 1 highlights the most frequently voiced arguments both for and against inclusion. Elements of successful inclusion programs are described in the second chapter, some of which include adequate support, an established policy, enthusiastic teachers and administrators, and openness to change. Chapter 3 describes situations in which inclusion has failed, usually due to inadequate preparation, training, and support. Current practices in selected Oregon schools are described in the fourth chapter. The final chapter examines issues of funding and the reform of federal-funding requirements. A conclusion is that inclusion is most successful when it is coupled with a broader restructuring that includes multiaged classrooms. A four-page condensation of the Bulletin and a sample policy statement from Montgomery County, Maryland, are included. (LMI)

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# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

## The Lessons of Pioneering School Districts

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Karen Irmsher

Oregon School Study Council
February 1995 • Volume 38, Number 6

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OSSC BULLETIN

# Inclusive Education in Practice

## The Lessons of Pioneering School Districts

Karen Irmsher

Oregon School Study Council
February 1995 • Volume 38, Number 6

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1787 Agate Street
College of Education
5207 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-5207
(503) 346-5044
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# Preface

Inclusion is a hot word. Mention it in a gathering of educators, and emotions can range all the way from passionate, almost religious pro-inclusion fervor to outright fear and dread. Parents experience the same spectrum of reactions. Some people hope that inclusion will go away if they don't think about it, don't talk about it.

That's not likely. Inclusion of students with disabilities is to education in the 90s what integration of blacks was in the 60s. It's a wave of change sweeping over the nation. In many ways it's an even broader change than integration. A high percentage of school districts nationwide never separated blacks from whites, but most have traditionally segregated various categories of disabled students by keeping them in special schools or classrooms

The concept of full inclusion challenges school districts to include all students, regardless of the type or degree of disabling conditions, in regular classrooms at their neighborhood schools.

This Bulletin examines some of the concerns inclusion raises. Can the disabled child be safe and get the help he or she needs to make academic progress? Does the education of regular students suffer? And is placement in a mainstream classroom really the best for every child?

For those considering a move toward more inclusive educational environments, this condensation of national research and interviews with Oregon educators will provide guidelines—dos and don'ts for effective change—and a look at what's going on in Oregon.

The author, Karen Irmsher, has a master's degree in education and a bachelor's degree in journalism. She has taught in grades K-12, worked as an aide with developmentally disabled children, and worked as a reporter for the *Springfield News*. She is currently employed by Lane Community College, where she teaches reading and language arts to adults who read below the fifth-grade level.

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# Introduction

During the 1991-92 school year, students with disabilities spent more of their time in regular classrooms than in any other school setting. That amounts to about 35.7 percent of the nation's more than 5 million students with disabilities, ages 3 to 21. This is a first, according to the U.S. Department of Education's Sixteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, published late in 1994. In 1986-87, only 27.2 percent of 3- to 21-year-old students with disabilities were in regular classes (Lynn Schnaiberg 1994).

The figures for Oregon are even more striking. During the 1991-92 school year nearly 63 percent of 3- to 21-year-old students with disabilities were being educated in regular classrooms (U.S. Department of Education 1994). In the 1970s, before passage of P.L. 94-172, many of these students had no access to schooling.

## How Did We Get Here?

The legal impetus for inclusion came in 1975, when Congress passed Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The impact of this law has been so great that those letters and numbers are now permanently etched into the psyche of every public education administrator nationwide. It goes with the territory.

Passage of the law came a year after the Comptroller General reported to Congress that fully 60 percent of the nation's disabled children were not receiving appropriate schooling. A minimum of 1.75 million disabled children were excluded from the public school system because of the severity of their handicaps, and 2.5 million children with disabilities were receiving an inappropriate education. Only sixteen states provided special-education services to more than half of their eligible school-age population (Virginia Roach 1991, Thomas Parrish 1993).

In Oregon, parents of severely disabled children sometimes moved to

Portland or Eugene, or placed their children in foster homes in these locales, to get schooling for their youngsters (Subbot 1995). Understandably, the parents of disabled children and youth nationwide lobbied long and hard for the passage of this landmark legislation.

Since passage of PL 94-192, youngsters with disabilities have had a legal right to a "free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment." The zero reject provision makes it illegal to exclude any student. What the legislation did not change, however, were the underlying assumptions about schooling for students designated "disabled."

Students with disabilities were seen as having a deficit that needed remediation or amelioration. Under this model, a continuum of educational services was delivered in set locations, each matched to the constellation of services believed to fit the identified type and amount of student deficit and disability. Until recently, "least restrictive environment" usually meant some kind of special placement, either in a separate facility or classroom (Dianne Ferguson 1994).

Special-education reform has focused on issues related to the placement of children with disabilities, using terms such as "mainstreaming," "least restrictive environment," "the regular education initiative," and, more recently, "full inclusion," or "supported education."

Mainstreaming came into vogue in the 1970s. It enabled students in separate programs to interact with nonhandicapped peers, usually during nonacademic activities. While the word *mainstreaming* never appears in the text of PL 94-142, its meaning is derived from the law's least-restrictive-environment clause, which mandates the following:

- To the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children who are not handicapped.
- Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occur only when the nature and severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplemental aides and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Richard Schattman and Jeff Benay 1992)

## Recent History

"Inclusion," according to Marty Kaufman, dean of the University of Oregon College of Education, "has been far more bottom up than top down. The experiences of parents, teachers, and professional groups have been listened to."

In the early 1980s, parents and educators began questioning the efficacy of mainstreaming. Special-education reformers asserted that the cat-

egorical nature and typical pullout approaches of programs for students with learning problems failed to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities and resulted in a parallel service system (Colleen Capper and John Larkin 1992). They pushed for more inclusive models where children with disabilities participated with nonhandicapped peers in both academic and nonacademic pursuits. These new reforms have been variously referred to as "integration," "full inclusion," and "the regular education initiative" (Schattman and Benay).

In many cases, the word *integration* simply replaced the word *mainstreaming* with little other change, said Dianne Ferguson, a University of Oregon researcher in the field of special education. Students integrated into classrooms were often accompanied by an adult with a clipboard. They were in the class, but not of the class. It was as if they were functioning in a special-education "bubble" (Ferguson).

In 1991, Congress renamed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and expanded the definition of disabilities. This change increased the momentum for reform. Many state departments of education and school districts, as well as some advocacy groups for the disabled, are now pushing to have all handicapped children educated in regular classrooms, regardless of the nature and severity of their handicap (Albert Shanker 1994-95).

Another vocal pro-inclusion group is made up of parents of students with disabilities who value the academic and social benefits of a mainstream education. Many of these parents have turned to the legal system to get the kind of placement they want for their children. In all five inclusion-related legal cases decided in federal courts at the start of the 1993-94 school year, the district involved was ordered to educate a child in general-education classes using supplementary aids and services whenever parents asked for such a placement. In these cases, it didn't matter matter how severe the child's disability or how good the school district's separate special-education program (June Behrmann 1993).

The push for inclusion, of course, doesn't exist in a vacuum. Nationwide it is interwoven with former President Bush's America 2000 and a trend toward increasing appreciation for cultural diversity. Here in Oregon, educators are dealing with changes mandated by the 1991 Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century—performance-based assessment, CIM, CAM, and the like.

At first glance, raising the overall performance levels of the nation's or the state's students might seem at odds with attempting to place children with all types of disabilities in regular classrooms. Many educators and parents of nondisabled children express concerns that further integration of disabled students into regular classrooms will lower the educational standards for the entire class. Parents of children with disabilities question whether it is wise to

let learning take second priority to socialization and friendship, or, indeed, if one must be traded for the other. And how can we expect disabled students to achieve as much as their less challenged classmates?

## The Oregon Perspective

Karen Brazeau, associate superintendent of the Oregon Department of Education, said she is perplexed by the debate over whether students with disabilities should be expected to achieve the same high standards as their nondisabled peers.

"Everything I know about special education tells me that it is wrong to expect that kids with disabilities, as a group, cannot learn as well or as much as other kids," Brazeau stated.

In Oregon, she said, the 1994 special-education census reported that 75.5 percent of children and youth receiving special education were identified as having a language disorder or a learning disability. By definition, these students are not cognitively impaired. The remaining 24.5 percent includes the other eleven categories. While many of these students have more significant disabilities, such as vision impairments, only about 3 percent of the entire special-education population experiences significant mental retardation.

"These students have one thing in common," said Brazeau. "They each need some kind of individualized instruction. Other than that, they are a very diverse group of kids with very different strengths and weaknesses. Why would we assume that, as a group, they are not as capable as their peers?"

"The burden is placed correctly on the educational system to provide the necessary supports and accommodations that will enable students to achieve more than they have in the past" (Karen Brazeau 1994).

So despite the fact that the state of Oregon has issued no official timelined mandate for inclusion and has no intention at doing so, it does stand squarely behind efforts in that direction. Brazeau said the state's role is one of forcing schools to place students in the least restrictive environment and requiring that districts make individualized decisions regarding the placement of each student. That, along with providing training and conferences. The rest is left up to the individual district.

No statewide statistics document the level of inclusion in Oregon, but it's safe to say that the schools here span the entire spectrum of possibilities. Specific examples are included later in this Bulletin. Some (mentioned briefly in chapter 3) are little changed from what they were ten years ago. Others are struggling mightily with the challenges of major reorganization. Some have undertaken change after making extensive preparations, while others have taken the plunge without laying much groundwork. And some could easily serve as models for the rest of the state and other states as well.

*Chapter 1*

# The Debate: Is Full Inclusion Best for All Students?

The philosophy of "full inclusion" means that there is always a presumption of placement in a general-education setting, a regular classroom with adequate supports if necessary. But is the general classroom always the best placement for each individual student?

## The Arguments For

The Arc (formerly Association of Retarded Citizens) says yes. Its 1994 position statement states: "Each student with a disability belongs in an age-appropriate classroom with peers who are not disabled" (Sharon Davis 1994).

Richard Villa, president of the Bayridge Educational Consortium in Vermont, is a nationally recognized proponent of full inclusion. According to Villa,

> We must recognize that the inclusion of children with disabilities brings a gift to the entire educational community. As long as we continue to send away any child we find challenging, we never have to change the educational system. However, once we accept the right of all children to belong and our responsibility to successfully educate them, we will make the necessary changes to organizational, curricular, discipline and instructional practices. These changes will enhance the quality of schooling and benefit many children, not just those with disabilities. (Richard Villa 1994)

Additional arguments for inclusion offered by proponents follow.

## Efficacy

No evidence in the past or present shows that removing students with disabilities from the mainstream and putting them into special classes or schools is an advantage for them. It may be easier for classroom teachers and at times seem advantageous to nonhandicapped pupils, but it is not advantageous to students with disabilities (Maynard Reynolds 1989).

Three recent studies comparing the effects of inclusive and noninclusive educational practices on the academic and social outcomes of special-needs children have shown a small to moderate positive effect. The average effect sizes ranged from positive .08 to .44. From this brief sampling, it appears that special-needs students in regular classes do better academically and socially than comparable students in noninclusive classes (Edward Baker and others 1994/95).

## Social-Skills Development

One of the long-term goals our society has for children is for them to live and work successfully in their communities. For children with disabilities, this same goal applies, though these students may need additional support. Regular classes and activities in schools, where nondisabled students serve as role models, are the appropriate placement for such experiential learning (Linda Davern and Roberta Schnorr 1991).

## Language/Communication Development

If we expect students with special needs to develop effective verbal language or other forms of communication, these students need to be immersed in rich language environments with their nondisabled peers.

## Building Friendships

Friendship is as important to children as it is to adults. It plays an integral part of their sense of well-being. To develop friendships, children need daily sharing time and experiences with others their age. Students who attend the same schools as their brothers, sisters, and neighbors are much less isolated than students who are bused to locations outside their neighborhoods. They are much more likely to develop friendships that carry over into the rest of their lives (Davern and Schnorr). Inclusion means that students with disabilities have guaranteed access to the mainstream and do not have to earn their way back into it (National Association of State Boards of Education 1994).

### Fostering Appreciation for Diversity

By attending school together, students with and without disabilities gain values, attitudes, and skills necessary to achieve interdependence as members of society (Karol Reganick 1993). Inclusive education seeks to create communities where we appreciate diversity and are not judged by the condition of our body or intellect, but by the content of our character. Thus inclusion serves as a bridge for present and future understanding between and among people with and without disabilities (National Association of State Boards of Education).

## The Arguments Against

While agreeing with the benefits that accrue in a classroom or school that mixes handicapped and nonhandicapped students, many people think there are still some valid reasons for the segregation of certain youngsters for some period of their education, if not its entirety.

### Opposition to General Classroom Placement as the Only Option

Numerous advocacy groups for the blind, deaf, attention-deficit disordered, and learning disabled believe a one-size-fits-all approach will be disastrous for the disabled children themselves (Shanker).

> "If we regard inclusion as a religious principle, if we disregard the differences among students we consider disabled, if we continue to insist that the least restrictive environment is some absolute standard rather than a continuum of variability that has truth only for each individual in question, we will lose some of the most valuable and creative and lovable citizens in our community."
>
> Source: Stanley C. Diamond, director of Mill Creek School, a program for seriously disturbed adolescents of the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital

Among a list of individuals and organizations that hold this belief are: the Learning Disabilities Association of America, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the American Council on the Blind, the Commission on the Education of the Deaf, the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders, the Council for Exceptional Children, the Council for Learning Disabilities, the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, the National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children, and the American Federation of Teachers ( "Position Papers on Full Inclusion "1993, Sara Sklaroff 1994, Stanley Diamond 1993, Roach).

The National Education Association is still on the fence, exhorting the field to provide sufficient empirical support prior to adopting full-inclusion practices. In an executive summary of a national forum on inclusion in 1992, the NEA recommended that to "create and maintain high quality outcomes, the school integration effort must be fully financed, piloted, and evaluated on a controlled basis before systemwide, statewide, or national implementation" (Timothy Lewis and others 1994).

Answering the question "Is placement in a regular classroom really the best option for every student?" Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, is one of many educators who say no. He said, "In calling for all disabled children to be placed in regular classrooms regardless of the severity and nature of their difficulty, full inclusion is replacing one injustice with another" (Shanker).

In a 1993 position paper, the Learning Disabilities Association of America put it this way:

> Many students with learning disabilities benefit from being served in the regular classroom. However, the regular education classroom is not the appropriate placement for a number of students with learning disabilities who may need alternative instructional environments, teaching strategies and/or materials that cannot or will not be provided within the context of a regular classroom placement.
>
> LDA believes that decisions regarding educational placement of students with disabilities must be based on the needs of each individual student rather than administrative convenience or budgetary considerations and must be the result of a cooperative effort involving the educators, parents, and the student when appropriate. ("Position Papers...")

The other groups listed above, along with many not listed, express similar beliefs.

Some of the specific concerns about full inclusion are as follows:

*1. Children will lose the range of services now available to them.*

Ideally, students with disabilities placed in regular classrooms receive the level of support services they need to participate academically and socially, and the other students' learning is not disrupted. But the level of support it takes to reach that ideal is, in some cases, immense. Many states and school districts are adopting full inclusion to save money. They are laying off support personnel, not adding them (Shanker).

> "A century ago, over enthusiasm for the institution as the only place for people with disabilities resulted in a great injustice. Today, our enthusiasm for the regular classroom as the only place for students with disabilities could create a tyranny equal to that of the institutionalization movement of a century ago. Let us remember the past and not repeat it."
>
> Source: Jim Kauffman, Professor of Special Education at the University of Virginia

Effective special education is individualized, often through a trial-and-error process. Well-trained special educators select from a variety of instructional techniques, curriculums, and motivational strategies and use evaluation systems that track students. Many members of the disability community believe this type of education is impossible to achieve in the regular classroom without a massive infusion of resources far beyond what most districts can afford (Douglas Fuchs and Lynn Fuchs 1994/95)

Others believe that students with learning disabilities can do well in a

regular-classroom setting if more of the strategies developed by special education, such as collaborative learning, cooperative teaching, peer tutoring, and so forth are integrated into the new setting (Justine Maloney 1994).

Portland State University recently collaborated with the Oregon Department of Education to study the impact of inclusive education in eleven Oregon elementary schools. All the schools had some staff members who received training from the ODE on the implementation of supported education. Thirty of seventy teachers polled agreed that it may not be possible to adequately focus on individual needs of students with IEPs in regular classrooms without pullout for some instruction. Twenty-four said they saw no negative outcomes for students with IEPs when support was adequate (Joel Arick and others 1994).

2. *Appropriateness for students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders.* Adaption of full-inclusion practice without empirical support is especially troublesome to parents and professionals who provide services to students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The majority of students included in studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of educating students with disabilities in a general setting have been developmentally delayed or learning disabled. The generalization of these studies to students with EBD is problematic at best. Examples at the classroom level have begun to emerge in professional and popular literature that point out negative outcomes following inclusion of students with EBD in the general-education setting (Lewis and others).

For some students, being in a classroom with twenty to thirty other individuals is far too distracting. A student who can't concentrate finds learning very difficult, and frustration often manifests in behavior problems. Some students have so much private terror and chaos going on in their minds already that they withdraw even further into themselves in a busy, lively classroom or public-school environment. Such students are more likely to drop out of school unless their learning takes place in a more protected environment (Diamond). Others act out so flagrantly that they irritate everyone around them, disrupt the learning environment, and end up being ostrasized by their peers. Without almost one-on-one support to provide instant feedback on positive and negative behaviors, these disruptive students make little social or academic progress and interfere with the progress of those around them (Richard Smelter 1994).

Jim Kauffman, a professor of special education at the University of Virginia, said he believes that the majority of students with emotional and behavioral disorders are now fully included in regular classrooms. "What I see," he said, "is that it is not working out very well in many schools. And I am therefore mystified by proposals to make things even more difficult for regular classroom teachers by asking them to take on more difficult students" (Jim Kauffman 1994).

*3. Obstruction of Academic Progress for Non-IEP Students.* Parents of nondisabled children worry that teachers will spend inordinate amounts of preparation and class time dealing with the needs of disabled students, thus decreasing the energy they have for teaching the rest of the class.

Few studies have been done on the amount of time lost to regular students in an inclusive classroom. The one study mentioned in an article by Debbie Staub and Charles A. Peck indicated no significant difference, but solid conclusions can't be based on one study.

> "As I look at the plight of teachers and schools today, I see the inclusion of even most of the students with emotion or behavior disorders who are now served in other places as adding insult to injury—unless, of course, the teachers who are asked to include these students in their regular classrooms are supported by a massive infusion of resources."
>
> Source: Jim Kauffman

Staub and Peck report that a limited research base (four studies) exists documenting the impact of inclusion on the academic or developmental progress of nondisabled children. These studies have shown no significant differences in educational progress for nondisabled students whether they are educated in an inclusive or noninclusive classroom environment (Staub and Peck 1994/95).

The Portland State University study polled parents, regular educators, special educators, IEP parents, non-IEP parents, and support staff for their perceptions of academic achievement for non-IEP students. Sixty-five percent or more said they thought the academic achievement of non-IEP students stayed the same (Arick and others). However, in that same study, twenty-eight out of seventy teachers agreed with the following statement: Students with IEPs take too much of regular-education teachers' time. Seventeen agreed that students with IEPs were disruptive/distracting to the class (Arick and others).

*4. Some teachers feel unable or unwilling to teach students with disabilities.* Fear of the unknown can do that. Teachers who feel they are not adequately trained to teach children with severe disabilities are often resistant to accepting them into their classrooms (Elizabeth Pearman and others 1992, Linda Randall 1995).

In a recent study of nineteen general-education teachers who were teaching students with severe disabilities for the first time, most of the teachers reacted to the initial placement in a cautious or negative manner. They wondered how the student would fit in and most felt that their training was inadequate.

By the end of the study, two remained relatively unchanged by the experience. These two teachers admitted that they had minimal involvement with the disabled student. The other seventeen experienced increased ownership and involvement with the student with severe disabilities in their classes

over the course of the school year. Teachers who changed were not only willing to become directly involved with the student with disabilities, but said they took action to become involved with the student. One wrote, "My attitudes about educating students with significant disabilities in general education have become more positive as a result of teaching a child with significant disabilities."

Transformations were gradual and progressive. Teachers reported beginning to view the child as a person rather than a disability, and said they established a personal relationship with the student. Teachers who had these experiences reportedly came to realize that they could successfully teach disabled students and that including the student was not as difficult as they had originally imagined. They also recognized their role as a model for the rest of the class and felt that their abilities as teachers grew through adapting lessons to meet learning differences (Michael Giangreco and others 1993).

This list of pros and cons is by no means exhaustive, but it touches on some of the major themes. Few argue with the benefits of being more inclusionary than we have in the past. But conflict arises when it comes to implementation—the practical considerations of actually providing all the needed training and supports in the classroom, and of presuming regular-classroom placement for every child.

*Chapter 2*

# When Inclusion Is Done Right

Districts that now aspire to a more inclusionary model are lucky. The pioneering work has been done. Thousands of districts throughout the United States, and in other countries as well, have spent the last two decades learning through trial and error. In general, inclusion has been most successful when it is an integral part of an overall restructuring effort (Ferguson 1995).

## Elements of Successful Inclusion

Successful inclusion programs include most of the following components. Primary sources for this list are Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook (1993), Joanne Eichinger and Sheila Woltman (1993), and Judy Schrag and Jane Burnette (1993/94). Some suggestions are taken from interviews with Oregon educators.

- Early involvement of all concerned (school board, administrators, regular-classroom teachers, special-education teachers, support staff, parents, and student) in discussions about proposed changes
- A mission statement, ideally written by representatives of this broad-based group (Ontario School District 1994)
- A continuing process of communication regarding the changes taking place
- Education of all concerned to make sure they understand the value of inclusion
- Involvement of all concerned in planning
- Strong support from administrators, including a commitment to reallocating special-education resources for support in the regular classroom

- Teachers, principals, and support staff willing to embrace change
- Inservice training for staff on topics such as collaborative teaching, multilevel classrooms, cooperative learning, adapting the curriculum, and working with special-needs students
- Shared planning/consulting time for regular- and special-education teachers, or other team-teaching configurations
- Needs of all students, with and without disabilities, addressed
- A pilot program before moving to full implementation
- Acquisition of necessary specialized equipment and adaptions needed to serve each student, coupled with physical changes in the classroom and school environment
- Adequate classroom support for teachers: instructional assistants and specialists such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, special-education teachers, and so forth
- Students placed in age-appropriate mainstream classrooms at their neighborhood schools
- Clear-cut steps and support available to teachers in solving the inevitable problems that crop up
- Instructional assistants free to help with the entire class, not just specific students with disabilities
- Encouragement and appreciation of teachers willing to experiment and be innovative, even if efforts are unsuccessful
- Education of all staff in the importance of inclusion as a school-wide belief system
- Opportunities for nondisabled students to learn about all types of diversity, including individuals with disabilities
- A structured system to promote peer friendships between disabled and nondisabled students
- Benchmarks to shoot for in year 1, year 2, and so forth
- A sense of community that values the abilities of all students, understands their limitations, and provides nurturing opportunities for them to develop a strong sense of self-worth, concern, and respect for others
- Flexible curricula and instruction that are accessible to all
- Strong ties among the school, parents, and the community
- A philosophy that celebrates diversity

## But What Does It Look Like?

"Mainstreaming means you're a visitor and inclusion makes you a part of the family," said Howard Blackman, executive director of the La Grange Area Department of Special Education, located in suburban Chicago. "Isolation from peers who can both contribute to and learn from each other is the most disabling condition for children, if not for all people"(Howard Blackman 1992).

### The Students

In the inclusionary model, students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are fully integrated into the life of a mainstream class. That classroom is in the school attended by the student's brothers, sisters, and neighbors. Consequently, when the student is at home, or elsewhere in the community, the child knows other children he or she comes in contact with.

In the classroom, the student studies science, reading, history—whatever the the class is studying—when the rest of the class does. He or she feels included, but performance expectations are designed to match the student's individual goals as directed by his IEP. He might answer questions orally, rather than in writing. Or listen to the story, rather than reading it himself. He might practice writing his numbers while other students do subtraction problems (Randall 1995). A student with lower capabilities might turn the pages while a partner reads aloud, or use a yes/no section on a language board to indicate preferences (Davern and Schnorr). Or she might say the spelling words (whispered in her ear by the teacher) loud enough for her fellow students to hear them, to practice vocalizing (Kent Logan and others 1994/95)

Special services are generally delivered in the classroom, often in small groups that include both disabled and nondisabled students. Pullouts for physical therapy, speech therapy, and so forth may still take place, but are limited to those instances where objective evaluation data confirm it is a more effective service-delivery system (Minnesota Department of Education 1992). During the day, students also receive instruction from their fellow classmates through cooperative-learning activities, peer tutoring, and buddy programs (Logan and others).

All students are encouraged to participate in all school activities, including afterschool and extracurricular activities (Maine State Department of Educational and Cultural Services 1993).

### The Teachers

The regular classroom teacher sets the tone of the classroom as a

nurturing community. She has primary, day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the educational progress of each of her students, disabled and nondisabled, but she doesn't operate in a vacuum. Schools embracing integrated or inclusive models often use a team approach for problem-solving, planning, and program implementation. The classroom teacher works as a team member with instructional aides, the principal, the special-education teacher, parents, and other specialists as needed to meet the special needs of all students who need extra assistance. No one member of the team is expected to have all the answers (Schattman and Benay).

The role of the special-education teacher also changes. No longer isolated, she coteaches with regular-classroom teachers; shares in the responsibility to provide training, support, and supervision to paraprofessioinals; and participates on teams as an equal member with parents, classroom teachers, and administrators (Schattman and Benay). In some schools, she may still be based in a resource room or learning center (Cindy Stults 1995). In others, that room may have been shut down (Randall).

Classroom teachers are involved in planning for changes. They are adequately prepared for their new responsibilities with training and collaborative-planning time. Training opportunities are ongoing, available on request (Eichinger and Woltman).

Teachers have, or acquire, the knowledge and skills needed to select and adapt curricula and instructional methods to meet individual student needs. Instructional arrangements include team teaching, cross-grade groupings, peer tutoring, and teacher-assistance teams. Teachers also foster a cooperative-learning environment and promote socialization ("Including Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms" 1993).

A third-grade teacher who works in an inclusive school in suburban Chicago described it this way:

> As a staff, we used to worry about which kids belonged to which teachers, and we'd wonder whether we were trained to teach those kids. We would discuss whether the special-education teachers were working as hard as the other teachers. Now none of those things matter. We are all teachers; we have a school full of students. We get on with what we're here to do. (Friend and Cook)

**The Principals**

At best, principals serve as transformative leaders who can articulate the language of possibility even for students with the most severe disabilities, thereby inspiring all members of their school and community to reach for their highest goals (Colleen Capper 1989).

The most important role the principal plays in the inclusion of special-education students is that of symbolic leader. Seeking out and spending time

with students with disabilities, and taking the time to be involved with educational concerns of both regular and special-needs students are ways principals can provide a vision of the acceptance of special-education students and programs. Effective principals are keenly aware of the symbolism of even the most mundane administrative acts, and they take ordinary occasions to demonstrate their beliefs (Leonard Burrello and others 1992).

The principal understands the needs of students with disabilities and makes sure that adequate numbers of personnel, including aides and support personnel, are available. She also meets with parents, arranges for accommodations to the physical plant, and works with the student's planning team to make sure equipment is adequate. She handles or delegates the necessary scheduling of these human resource and equipment needs throughout the day ("Including Students...", Diane Knight and Donna Wadsworth 1993).

The principal and other school administrators also provide support for and encourage the ongoing collaboration of parents, teachers, administrators, and other school and community members. They take steps to educate the school community concerning reasons for moving to inclusionary practices. They provide teachers and support staff with access to ongoing staff development opportunities and arrange release time for these extra training sessions (Maine State Department of Educational and Cultural Services). Recognizing that many of today's teachers have little or no experience with collaborative planning and teaching, the principal arranges for the training, support, and practice they need to learn positive interdependence, small-group skills, and group-processing skills (Barbara Ayres and Luanna Meyer 1992).

**The School Board**

The school board recognizes that it bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that children with disabilities receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. It follows the recommendations of the National Association for State Boards of Education by working with educators and community members in establishing policies to support inclusion of students with disabilities (Marilyn Rollison 1993).

The school board sees itself as a central part of the shared culture of the district's educational community. Board members participate in brainstorming and planning groups that include parents, community members, administrators, and teachers. Group members develop a sense of collegiality by sharing their spiritual values and visions for effective change. If necessary, they participate in team-building and communication-skills training to help increase mutual respect for, and acceptance of, diverse opinions. This helps break down the "us and them" thinking that sometimes develops between board members and educators. Group members then find it easier to

# Policy Statement: Education of Students with Disabilities

*The following selections were taken from a seven-page policy statement adopted by the Board of Education of Montgomery County (Maryland). It was adopted in 1978, reaffirmed in 1985, reformatted in 1986, and amended in 1993. The purpose and position sections are included almost in their entirety. Later sections are presented in brief.*

A. Purpose

- To ensure that in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), all children from birth through age 20, and who are disabled, regardless of the severity of the disability, and who are in need of special education and related services shall be identified, assessed, and provided a free, appropriate public education consistent with state regulations and Federal and state laws.
- To affirm the expectation that formal identification of disabilities should not be a prerequisite to implementation of appropriate early intervention....
- To commit MCPS to provide an educational program that prepares students with disabilities for self-sufficient and productive lives as full participating members of our society to the maximum extent possible.
- To commit MCPS to the task of creating a climate of acceptance and respect for individuals with disabilities among staff and students.
- To affirm the Board of Education's strong commitment to the genuine participation of students with disabilities with peers without disabilities in all aspects of MCPS, including academic, social, non-academic and extracurricular activities.
- To establish guidelines for working toward these objectives, and for all necessary activities to comply with federal and state mandates.

B. Issue

Services for individuals with disabilities focus on:

- Consideration of the student as an individual student with unique needs and capabilities as reflected in the substitution of the phrase "student with disabilities" for "handicapped student."
- Collaboration among general and special educators, families, state and local agencies, and the community.
- The development of educational programs and transition services/supports that prepare individuals with disabilities for success in post-secondary education, post-school employment, and community participation.

*Section C—Position* details: the leadership, level of quality, compliance with federal and state laws, involvement of parents, student/staff ratios, staff accountability, monitoring of students placed outside MCPS, importance of family involvement, establishment of outcomes, commitment to a continuum of services, and commitment to overcoming attitudinal and physical barriers in order to ensure equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

*Section D—Desired Outcomes* includes: an education that encourages students with disabilities to develop their full potential, to develop community ties, to be accepted as genuine participants in educational, work and community settings. This section also seeks to foster collaboration among families, schools, communities, government agencies and the business sector; and in schools, among general educators, special educators and parents.

*Section E—Implementation Strategies* is twenty-one entries long. Included in this section are: guidelines for administrative structure, admission, encouraging parent involvement, encouragement for early intervention, details of the IEP process, description of the continuum of alternative services, curricula that reflect appropriate learning outcomes, outline of staff development needs, programs to increase understanding of individuals with disabilities, and inclusion of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities.

*Reviewing and Reporting* mandates that the superintendent monitor progress and report annually, or more frequently, to the board of education. It requires that the comprehensive plan for services and programs for student with disabilities be updated annually, revised as needed, and submitted to the board of education and the Maryland State Department of Education. It directs the district to survey parents to see how well they think their children's needs are being met.

*Source:* Montgomery Public Schools Board of Education.

work together to agree on policies and set goals.

The Austin (Texas) Independent School District used this model to focus on helping unique subgroups of children to receive services without prejudice. Groups included children with Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS), students with limited English proficiency, gifted and talented students, migrants, mainstream religious students, children new to the school, and learning-disabled children, to name a few. Many highly charged, controversial issues generated by these special children's needs were handled productively because the group had formed a foundation of openness, tolerance, and understanding. Gary McKenzie, a board member, stated that collegiality allowed him to reduce defense mechanisms he had toward educators, and to listen to and be candid and helpful in relations with other team members. He interpreted programs and school philosophy to other board members, generally provided candid and supportive feedback to the team, and was committed to supporting team decisions (William G. Cunningham and Donn W. Gresso 1993).

> "I view full inclusion a as a preferred condition, but not as the only possibilitiy. Taking an extreme position either way often does not coincide with the reality of the student's needs. Reducing and eventually ending separate education may be an important goal, but not to the devaluation of the existing programs."
>
> Source: Karol A. Reganick

In setting inclusionary policies, school boards go on record as recognizing that our public schools belong to everyone and are for everyone; that it is the responsibility of the board to provide, to the best of its ability, an excellent and equitable education for all public school students and to ensure a teaching and learning environment that affords equal opportunity for all (National School Boards Association 1994).

**Superintendents**

Little has been written on the role of the superintendent. In the ideal scenario, he or she assumes a transformative-leadership role, much like that described above for principals. In Oregon, Dave Cloud played that role in the Ontario School District.

Cloud introduced the district to site-based management, giving the principals responsibility for special education. To bolster their capabilities for change, he gave them power over the allocation of special-education monies for students placed in their buildings. To lead more effectively, Cloud attended a summer course on inclusion at McGill Institute in Montreal, Canada. He came back ready to captain his district into the turbid waters of inclusion.

Cloud set up opportunities to educate the board of education and community about the benefits of inclusion, and he backed his staff in their

efforts to take on this challenge. He is now superintendent of the Roseburg School District, where he continues to play a transformative role (Ontario School District 1994).

Irv Nikolai, superintendent of the Forest Grove School District, also played a leading role in his district's evolution toward more inclusive education. Nikolai said he began looking into the concept of inclusion about five years ago. He believes that what we now call inclusion reflects the original intent Congress had when it passed P.L. 94-142.

Nikolai commissioned a districtwide committee to begin looking at inclusionary models and to examine recent data on effective practices. "My role was to raise questions," said Nikolai, "to keep moving them back to the literature, the data, the knowledge. They basically came to a conclusion that what we were doing was not based on what was best for the kids. What we've done since then is to completely reorganize the way we do business with respect to the special-needs kids."

**Parents**

Parents, as in the past, are involved in decisions regarding their child's IEP. In addition to the parents, IEP meetings usually include the regular-classroom teacher, special-education teacher, support specialists such as speech and physical therapists, and often the principal. In this process parents provide key information about the student's abilities, interests, strengths, and weaknesses; they also share their long-term and short-term aspirations regarding the child's education. Parents participate in the process of determining the types of learning environments that best suit the needs of their child.

Parents are encouraged to observe the student in the classroom, but discouraged from being overprotective. When necessary, they work with teachers and other support staff to jointly generate a consistent behavioral-management program that will fit in with preestablished classroom rules (Knight and Wadsworth).

Parents can chose to be members of districtwide or building-level school-integration teams—groups that meet regularly to identify and assist in the provision of supports necessary to allow students with disabilities to be participating, accepted members of the school community (Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services). Parents may also participate in support groups or serve as volunteers (Knight and Wadsworth).

When parents of disabled or nondisabled students have questions or concerns, they know they can talk to someone and be heard. Some schools have a monthly format for such discussions (Marion Morehouse 1994). Others provide occasional informational meetings or one-on-one conferences

as needed (Maria Raynes and others 1991).

### Instructional Assistants

Instructional assistants are no longer "Velcroed" to a certain child or category of children. They are assigned to a teacher, or they move from class to class throughout the day, going where needs are the most pressing (Ontario School District 1994, Jo Agnew and others 1994).

When they work with special-needs students, it is usually in small groups that include both IEP students and regular students (Randall 1995).

### Classroom Structure

Multilevel or multiage classrooms are ideal for this type of integration. The range of skills, abilities, and performance expectations in multilevel classrooms is already wide, so the learning differences of students with disabilities stand out less (Morehouse, Susan Coady 1994, Ferguson 1994).

Because these classrooms include students with many types of differences, the concept of deficits is replaced by an acceptance of and appreciation for diversity. Learning supports are effectively delivered to the full range of students, labeled or not, by groups of teachers with different abilities and expertise working together. Every child has the opportunity to learn in many different places, including small groups, large groups, classrooms, hallways, libraries, and a wide variety of community locations. The needs of the child, rather than the persons providing supports, are the chief determining factor (Ferguson 1994).

### The Community

The learning enterprise of reinvented inclusive schools is part and parcel of a constant conversation among students and teachers, school personnel, families, and community members, to construct learning, document accomplishments, and adjust supports (Ferguson 1994).

One of the ultimate goals of inclusionary education for students with disabilities is to increase their awareness of and ability to participate in all facets of community life. It follows, then, that the true test of effectiveness is the extent to which they actually do participate, using generic facilities and services, sharing friendships, and generally feeling that they are valued, contributing members of the community in which they live (Lech Wisniewski and Sandra Alper 1994).

*Chapter 3*

# When Inclusion Fails

In a nutshell, when inclusion fails, the major reasons given are inadequate preparation, training, and support. Looking at it from the larger perspective, inclusion fails when people do not see it as an integrated part of educational restructuring but instead as an add-on (Ferguson 1995).

An October 1994 Policy Update of the National Association of State Boards of Education states, "Inclusion is not: dumping students without proper supports and services, trading the quality of a child's education for integration, nor expecting general education teachers to teach without the support they need to teach effectively" (NASBE).

Yet these types of situations, where everybody loses, are occurring all over the United States. A listing of the many ways schools are making a mess of inclusion would be instructional, but not nearly as interesting as letting teachers speak for themselves. Understandably, few teachers are willing to go on record with their complaints. Offering them anonymity allowed them to tell it like it is.

## Elsewhere in the Nation

The four comments below appeared in an article in *The Instructor* (Friend and Cook).

> I had twenty-nine third graders, four with disabilities. There wasn't anyone to help me. I didn't know what to expect of them; I didn't want to do something that would hurt those students. If I had known what the expectations were, I could have done a better job.
>
> —Enfield, Connecticut

> I had a student with an emotional disability placed in my class. He would bite other students and blow in their faces. He wouldn't stay in one place for a minute. I spent the entire year worrying that he would

seriously injure another student. I don't think he should have been in my classroom. I think I should have had more help.

—Indianapolis, Indiana

I had a fifth-grade student reading at a first-grade level. I didn't have materials for her. She wanted to read, but just couldn't. I don't know why she was in my class. She should have been with other kids who couldn't read. I had nothing for her.

—Chicago, Illinois

Sometimes I felt like I wasn't a teacher, more like a traffic cop. The special education teacher came in sometimes. The aide came in every day. The speech therapist was here twice a week. I didn't have time to do my own planning, much less planning for everyone else. It almost would have been better to be left alone.

— Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## Critical Oregon Educators

The following comments were made by four teachers and an administrator who spoke of their frustrations with various aspects of inclusion as it has been put into practice at their schools.

I have four kids with IEPs in my classroom. A number of others don't qualify for IEPs but need a lot of extra attention. I don't have any help in the classroom and I don't feel like I've been adequately trained to teach them. When we have problems, I talk to the kids, talk to the parents, talk to the special-ed teacher. It takes a lot more time.

Teachers always try to work with the situation that's there, but with only one adult in the class and thirty-five kids, there's only so much you can do. I think kids with special needs have special needs and all kids do better with smaller class sizes. Taking them out of a resource room where the ratio is five kids to one adult, and putting them in with a class of thirty-five just doesn't make any sense to me.

It's the politically correct thing right now to think of inclusion as the golden door for everybody, but I really think that adult attention and individual attention are the best thing for a kid with learning difficulties.

—Teacher #1, small town school

I've seen a lot of good things. I think children should be included as much as possible. But classes are too large. When I have twenty-seven students in a class, I have no time to give the quiet ones who have learning problems the extra help they need. I disagree with trying full

inclusion first, because that means the child has to fail before other options are tried.

—Teacher #2, city school

At this school the resource center is still firmly entrenched. No stigma is attached to it because most of the "cool kids" go there. There must be something in the water around here. I have twenty-nine students and no aides. One of my students has a drug addict for a Mom. He requires lots of extra attention.

Before coming here, I worked at a small town school that was committed to inclusion. They even had a ceremony when they closed the resource room. Here, ideas about inclusion are very negative. Teachers are anxious to have their resource kids out of the classroom. They're scared of them. They think they're too much trouble.

—Teacher #3, rural school

Here it depends totally on the teachers. Some of the teachers are great and take the special-needs kids as much as they can. With others it's much harder. Some will take the kids, but insist that I (special-education teacher) provide the modification or different materials. They want somebody with the child if they have to change their teaching in any way.

There's no direction from the administration as far as telling these teachers they have to make modifications for these kids. We went to an inclusion workshop last fall. That was the first time it had been mentioned in our district at all. Our administrator embraced the concept, but I don't think there was much follow-through about what it would mean. His focus was on the ability to use the educational assistants in a broader capacity. He didn't do any background work. We need to do some inservicing with teachers. Not just "this is what we're doing."

There are always going to be teachers who are more embracing of it. But it's an attitude. If the administration doesn't have it, why should some of the teachers? That attitude trickles down to the kids, too. As they get older, it's harder and harder for them to feel included.

—Teacher #4,
special-education teacher, rural school

I am really alarmed at the totality with which mainstreaming and inclusion is being pursued as sort of a blanket thing to do. It isn't best for all children. Appropriate education means an education that the child can really benefit from. Kids with behavior disorders need environments protected from stimuli. These kids can't cope very well with the noise, visual distractions, all the activity that happens in a regular classroom.

They also need frequent reinforcement about their behavior—much more than a teacher responsible for thirty kids can humanly provide. If it were possible to have more aides in regular classrooms, provide more positives than negatives, prompt consequences—if mainstream teachers had that kind of backup, then inclusion might work for more behavior-disordered kids. As it is, that's often not available.

—Interview #5,
administrator working on public-school placements
of SED kids previously segregated
in a day-treatment program

## Other Criticisms

Three major complaints not mentioned above are angry parents, teacher burnout, and a lack of basic life-skills training. These, too, are consequences of a poorly executed move to inclusion.

While the parents of children with disabilities are generally pleased with the improvement in their children's social skills, the parents of nondisabled children may be less than thrilled at some of the behaviors their children pick up. While most children tend to ostracize and isolate peers whom they find abusive or disturbing, a small number of children actually mimic aberrant behavior, creating an ever-broadening spiral of disruption in the classroom and at home (Smelter and others 1994).

And some parents come to the conclusion that forcing children, regardless of their abilities and social maturity, to be educated in the same place at the same time, using the same techniques, with the same teacher, regardless of that teacher's training, is a far cry from sound education (Smelter and others).

"This trend is generally a good thing if those kids and their teachers are getting the type of support that they need," says Thomas Hehir, director of the U.S. Department of Education's office of special-education programs. "But we know that some kids are being integrated without the appropriate support."

Source: Schnaiberg

Teachers sometimes concur. In response to a questionnaire on whether the effects of inclusion had been generally positive or negative for students other than those with special needs, a teacher at Coats Middle School in a suburb of a large Texas city wrote, "Regular students are missing out with regard to individual assistance from the teacher, contact between teacher and parent, and preparation of appropriate acitivities and assignments by the teacher. The teacher finds a disproportionate amount of her time and energy goes to serve the special education students."

A science teacher at the same school wrote, "I think my instruction level to the entire class has been lowered because of the special needs stu-

# BULLETIN IN BRIEF

OREGON SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

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# Inclusive Education in Practice

*By Karen Irmsher*

## Introduction

Inclusion of students with disabilities is to education in the 90s what integration of blacks and whites was in the 60s. It's a wave of rapid change sweeping over the nation. The 1991-92 school year was the first in which more students with disabilities, nationwide, were educated in regular classroom settings than in any other placement (U.S. Department of Education 1994).

Many state departments of education and school districts, as well as some advocacy groups for the disabled, are now pushing to have all handicapped children educated in regular classrooms, regardless of the nature and severity of their handicap (Albert Shanker 1994-95). Other groups and individuals think such changes are unwise for a variety of reasons.

## The Debate: Is Full Inclusion Best for All Students?

Proponents of full inclusion argue for a presumption of placement in a regular classroom with adequate supports if necessary. They say no evidence shows that removing students with disabilities from the mainstream and putting them into special classes or schools is an advantage for them (Reynolds 1989). Placement in a classroom of same-age peers is advantageous for the development of social skills, along with language and communication skills. It provides students with disabilities the opportunity to build friendships with other children in their community, and it fosters among all children an appreciation for diversity.


The Oregon School Study Council—an organization of member school districts in the state—is a service of the College of Education, University of Oregon.

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### The Arguments Against

Few argue with the benefits of being more inclusionary than we have in the past. But conflict arises when it comes to implementation—the practical considerations of actually providing all the needed training and supports in the classroom, and of presuming regular classroom placement for every child. Many people think there are valid reasons for the segregation of certain youngsters for some period of their education, if not its entirety.

Numerous advocacy groups for childen with disabilities object to making classroom placement the only option. Some fear that children will lose the range of services now available to them. Others question the appropriateness of a regular classroom placement for students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders.

Parents of nondisabled children worry that the time teachers spend preparing for the needs of disabled students will decrease the energy they have for teaching the rest of the class. And some teachers feel unable or unwilling to teach students with disabilities.



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## When Inclusion Is Done Right

Thousands of districts throughout the United States, and in other countries as well, have spent the last two decades learning through trial and error. In general, inclusion has been most successful when it is an integrated part of an overall restructuring effort (Dianne Ferguson, telephone interview March 1995).

### Elements of Successful Inclusion

Successful inclusion programs incorporate most of the following components. Primary sources for this list are Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook (1993), Joanne Eichinger and Sheila Woltman (1993), and Judy Schrag and Jane Burnette (1993/94).

- Early and ongoing involvement of all concerned (school board, administrators, regular-classroom teachers, special-education teachers, support staff, parents, and student) in discussions of the value of inclusion, proposed changes, and planning
- A mission statement, ideally written by representatives of this broad-based group (Ontario School District 1994)
- Strong support from administrators, including a commitment to reallocate special-education resources for support in the regular classroom
- Teachers, principals, and support staff willing to embrace change
- Inservice training for staff on topics such as collaborative teaching, multilevel classrooms, cooperative learning, adapting the curriculum, and working with special-needs students
- Shared planning/consulting time for regular- and special-education teachers, or other team-teaching configurations
- Needs of all students, with and without disabilities, addressed
- A pilot program before moving to full implementation
- Acquisition of necessary specialized equipment and adaptations needed to serve each student, coupled with physical changes in the classroom and school environment
- Adequate classroom support for teachers: instructional assistants and specialists such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, special-education teachers, and so forth
- Students placed in age-appropriate mainstream classrooms at their neighborhood schools
- Clear-cut steps and support available to teachers in solving the inevitable problems that crop up
- Instructional assistants free to help with the entire class, not just specific students with disabilities
- Encouragement and appreciation of teachers willing to experiment and be innovative
- Education of all staff in the importance of inclusion as a schoolwide belief system
- Opportunities for nondisabled students to learn about all types of diversity, including individuals with disabilities
- A structured system to promote peer friendships between disabled and nondisabled students
- Benchmarks to shoot for in year 1, year 2, and so forth
- A sense of community that values the abilities of all students, understands their limitations, and provides nurturing opportunities
- Flexible curricula and instruction that are accessible to all
- Strong ties among the school, parents, and the community
- A philosophy that celebrates diversity

## When Inclusion Fails

When inclusion fails, the major reasons given are inadequate preparation, training, and support. Three other major complaints are teacher burnout, a lack of basic life-skills training, and parents (of students both with and without disabilities) who are angry because they don't feel their children are getting what they need to maximize their learning potential. These, too, are consequences of a poorly executed move to inclusion.

## Current Practices in Selected Oregon Schools

Interviews with staff at selected Oregon schools provide snapshots of inclusionary education in the mid-1990s.

### Tigard-Tualatin School District

"We no longer have separate programs for each disability," said Russell Joki, superintendent

of the Tigard-Tualatin School District. "We don't break up our services like that any more: learning disabled, reading, severely handicapped, EMR. Now each building has two specialists, with resource rooms as their base of operations. Students all go to their home schools, unless their parents choose otherwise. Some students are in that class all day, while others do as much as possible there and then go to another school environment to work on IEP goals and objectives."

The roles of the principals, classroom teachers, instructional assistants, and special-education teachers have changed. Principals are more involved in placement decisions, more involved with parents of severely disabled children. Classroom teachers are working directly with special-education students. Teachers have become much more aware of how regular-education skills and special-education skills can combine to enhance learning for all students (Kelley Popick, telephone interview December 1994).

### Bohemia Elementary School, South Lane School District

Linda Randall, who teaches at Bohemia Elementary School, was one of the first teachers in her district to accept placement of severely disabled students in her classroom. Those students fit in well, and Randall has included students with disabilities in her classroom ever since.

The secret to success, according to Randall, is that the classroom teacher has to want to do it. And there has to be support for the teachers, either emotional or physical. They also need planning time with the people who are supporting them. It helps to have training, but Randall thinks it is also valuable to just jump in and try things.

### Eugene Public Schools

Cindy Stults, coordinator of the district's Educational Support Services, said that the district has made great strides toward becoming more inclusionary. It is committed to offering a continuum of services for youngsters, to looking at each individual child and seeing what's appropriate. For the most part, instruction and specialized help take place in the general-education classroom, with disabled students working alongside general-education students.

### Buckingham Elementary School, Bend-LaPine School District

Marion Morehouse, principal of Buckingham Elementary School, divided his school into four smaller schools or "ranches." Each ranch has five classrooms, most of them multiage. Ideally, each child will stay in the same ranch for the full five years.

Textbooks no longer form the subject matter core. While students may be working on the same topic, their assignments often differ, so students with special needs aren't singled out. Each reading teacher covers two ranches. They pull kids out of classrooms to work with them at little tables scattered around the school.

### Lynch View Elementary School, Centennial School District

In the 1992-93 school year, Lynch View Elementary went to multilevel (two or three grades combined) classrooms. Only students who lived in the neighborhood remained at Lynch View, where they were integrated into regular classrooms. The special-education teacher stayed on, working with teachers in the classrooms and serving as a resource.

The 1993-94 school year marked the closing of the resource room. The special-education teacher became a classroom teacher and the learning-disabilities teacher assumed the role of building consultant, working in the classrooms with teachers and students (Susan Coady, telephone interview January 1995).

### Ontario School District

All except the very severely disabled children had been attending classes in Ontario neighborhood schools since 1977, but students were served and often placed according to label: TMR, migrant, learning disabled, and so forth. Programs for the varied categories of severely disabled were spread out all over the county.

By 1991, all students, with the exception of twelve TMR students, were attending their neighborhood schools. Soon after that, the remaining twelve were integrated. Instructional Assistants can now be utilized to support students throughout the school, label or no label. Staff development time has increased dramatically.

## Issues of Funding

The Center for Special Education Finance (CSEF) recently polled all fifty states to assess, among other things, their perspective on federal funding policy. By far, the states' greatest concern was the failure of the federal government to meet the early promises of federal support under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Some states expressed concern that current federal funding provisions run counter to inclusionary efforts. Many people believe federal funding formulas should be reformed.

## Conclusion

The move toward inclusion is and will continue to be a growing trend. Almost everyone recognizes the value in more fully integrating individuals with disabilities into public schools and regular classrooms. The most heated controversy centers on how inclusion is implemented and whether full inclusion should be the only option. Many educators believe that inclusion is most effective when the integration of special-needs students is coupled with a broader restructuring that includes multiaged classrooms.

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dents." And a teacher of foreign languages said, "Special education is adding to an already increasingly difficult, if not impossible, job. Given all the other problems that teachers must deal with, the 'normal' student is the big loser."

With that much dissatisfaction, it's not surprising to learn that teacher burnout at Coats Middle School was widespread that year. Four teachers left midyear, and at the time the article was written, one-fifth of the teachers mentioned that they were considering resigning at the end of the year (Lawrence Baines and others 1994).

Susan Ohanian, a longtime teacher, raises another question:

> Just how "socializing" is it for Joey to sit in class after class not understanding the material—and being ignored by the 'regular' students? Maybe his teachers should have spent less time helping him participate in some small way in lessons on Washington's battle plan, the three branches of government, or the causes of World War I. Maybe someone should have helped him learn to tie his shoes and make change for a dollar (Susan Ohanian 1990).

*Chapter 4*

# Current Practices in Selected Oregon Schools

In its "1994 Update on Inclusion in Education of Children with Mental Retardation," the Arc rated Oregon eighteenth in a national ranking of inclusiveness. That ranking, based on data from the 1990-91 school year, was up from twenty-first in the 1989-90 school year (Davis).

Interviews with staff at the following Oregon schools provide snapshots of inclusionary education in the mid-1990s.

## Tigard-Tualatin School District

"We no longer have separate programs for each disability," said Russell Joki, superintendent of the Tigard-Tualatin School District. "We don't break up our services like that any more: learning disabled, reading, severely handicapped, EMR. Now each building has two specialists, with resource rooms as their base of operations. "Our kids all go to their home schools, unless their parents choose otherwise."

But it wasn't always like that. Not too many years ago, most of the severely disabled students spent their days in self-contained classrooms.

Inclusion Specialist Kelley Popick, who collaborates with six of the district's nine elementary schools, has been on the frontline of these changes. Another inclusion specialist collaborates with the other three elementary schools and the three middle schools. Coordination at the two high schools is by the onsite building team.

Seven years ago, when Popick signed on with the district, she taught in one of the district's self-contained classrooms. Students with mild disabilities had been mainstreamed for many years, but that year every child began going somewhere outside of the self-contained classroom at least once a day. Six

years ago the district began participating in Project Quest, offered through Portland State University. Students with severe disabilities were included in regular classrooms for certain parts of the day, but not a. day. Several kindergartners were included for the whole class day. Those students are now in the sixth grade. Five years ago all the students returned to their home schools for placement, and all but a handful of students began spending most of their day in a typical classroom setting.

The Quest Program assisted the district in making changes. Ruth Falco and Joel Arick provided the framework, said Popick, but the school no longer uses that program in its entirety. It was based on the assumption that students learn best when learning skills are used in functional and meaningful routines. The Quest model operated on the premise of a self-contained classroom with daily outside placements. Popick said the district has now evolved beyond that, but the premise of meaningful and functional routines remains the same.

At the six schools in which Popick consults, all but one student goes to a home classroom for at least 50 percent of the day, and that student is moving toward more inclusion daily. Some students are in that class all day, while others do as much as possible there and then go to another school environment to work on IEP goals and objectives. The quiet of a resource room is sometimes more conducive to concentration for students who are extremely distractible. A learning specialist is there to assist them.

The roles of the principals, classroom teachers, instructional assistants, and special-education teachers have changed. Principals are more involved in placement decisions, more involved with parents of severely disabled children. Classroom teachers are working directly with special-education students. During the first year or so, this was difficult for many. "At first we had teachers who didn't ask for help when they needed it. It was awkward at times. It was not something that we anticipated beforehand," noted Popick. "Teachers have traditionally been alone in their rooms. I think that's one of the hardest models to get over. Thinking you can handle everything yourself."

Teachers can now arrange to have mutual planning time with special-education teachers before and after school. Popick said teachers have become much more aware of how regular-education skills and special-education skills can combine to enhance learning for all students.

Other supports include social-skills groups for students who need social- and behavioral-skills development, treatment teams for students with severe behavioral disorders, and a transdisciplinary team that meets once a month. This group, which includes a facilitator, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a speech teacher, a learning specialist, and the classroom teacher (whenever possible), focuses on meeting the needs of severely disabled students who have multiple needs.

If the district had a chance to start over, Popick would make sure that all classroom teachers had more training and were clear on their lines of support from the beginning. Now each teacher knows that if she has more than she can handle due to a special-needs student, the first step is to do some informal problem-solving with other staff in the building. Or she can go to her principal. The next step is a referral to the multidisciplinary team, or the building-support team. This group, which meets weekly, includes the school psychologist, the principal, a learning specialist, a speech therapist, a counselor, and a Chapter 1 teacher if the school has one. Teachers come in individually to ask the group for guidance, direction, and support in dealing with the challenges of a mixed classroom.

The involvement of principals varies. Some have worked on staff development to help teachers and aides become more effective, and some get involved with students on a child-by-child basis. Popick says that some of the principals who are very involved have increased disability awareness due to their backgrounds or because of a special interest in this population. The support of the administration has been a key factor in successfully including all students in their home schools.

Popick sees many benefits to inclusion:

> In a regular classroom, you get exposed to a lot more of the curriculum and there's some incidental learning that cannot be predicted or taught in a self-contained classroom. Social skills are better modeled and in general the severely disabled students are happier. We've found fewer behavior problems overall, and when they occur, we have more people to find solutions.

Scheduling is the biggest challenge, said Popick:

> We don't always have the staff necessary to meet the needs of a child during the time the teacher may need it. But our staff has always been very supportive of one another and we can usually find a solution quickly, although with shrinking dollars we sometimes have to be very creative.

## Bohemia Elementary School
## South Lane School District

Linda Randall teaches at Bohemia Elementary School, a school of approximately 500 students. A teacher in the district for twenty years, she was one of the first teachers in the South Lane School District to accept placement of severely disabled students in her classroom. This account is from her perspective. Students' names have been changed.

Several years ago the new special-education teacher asked Randall if she could place two severely disabled students in her classroom. Both were

academically behind, but not behaviorally difficult. She agreed to give it a try.

They stayed most of the day the first day. "They fit in so well," says Randall. "The other kids helped them a lot, made sure they could do their part." When they'd been there two or three weeks, the class had a party to celebrate their transition.

> Ben and Katie marched up to the front of the room. They announced that they thought it was wonderful and thanked everyone for the party. Everyone in the class had big smiles. The other kids really helped make it. But you also have to know that I did have extra support to make it work. I had an educational aide.

Randall soon realized that she didn't need help all day, even though she had a large class. She kept the aide for about forty-five minutes every morning while the class did spelling and language arts. "Math was the hardest to try to integrate them," she recalls. But she found ways. When the class did manipulative activities, Katie could count out the pieces for them to work with.

Randall had other low-ability students, too. For reading, the resource teacher came into the room so they could team-teach. Ben and Katie listened to stories and answered questions, then one of the teachers could pull them aside for extra work. "What went up was their self-esteem. They are never going to be mental giants, but they needed to know they were accepted and wonderful people outside of Room 3 [the resource room]."

The next year, Randall had three students who were labeled severely handicapped and one spina bifida student she believes should have been similarly labeled. She also had six students who were very low academically, and a cluster of Chapter 1 kids. The principal decided to help her out by putting only twenty-one kids in the class and giving her the high-talented and gifted students. She had that combination for two years.

> When the handicapped students came in, two of them signed and could make noise but were really hard to understand. Their speech improved so much from being with other kids. One child, Suzanne, if you didn't engage her, she would just sit and stare at the wall. She couldn't copy from the overhead. By the second year, she could. By the time she left me, after two years, she was much more assertive. Suzanne had learned to say, "No! I don't want to do this!" to other kids, and she would get out her paper and start doing work on her own. She wasn't staring at the wall anymore.
>
> The regular kids could see that some of these kids were different—that they needed some slack. But there was another girl in a wheelchair who sounded and thought normally. They didn't give her any slack.

One student, Kelli, entered with major behavior problems:

> They wanted to Velcro someone to Kelli when she first came in, but I had the aide work with other kids too. If the aide only works with one student, the child stays isolated and has no chance to grow. There were times I'd come in and Kelli would drive me crazy with her screaming or slamming doors. She was a hitter too. When she hit other kids she got instant feedback. The kids would yell at her, "Don't hit me! It hurts!" She learned.

Kelli wanted to be working on the same papers as everyone else. Randall would have planned something else for her to do using the same paper. Kelli would write numbers on it or find words. The focus was on hands-on activities. Randall would make copies of pictures and have students write a sentence underneath. Kelli and Jason knew sign language. They got to be the experts and teach it to the rest of the class.

Due to budget cuts, classroom aides are in short supply now. Teachers with severely disabled students in their classes get a half hour a week of planning time with the educational assistants who formerly worked in the resource room.

The secret to success, according to Randall, is that the classroom teacher has to want to do it. And there has to be support for the teachers, either emotional or physical. They also need planning time with the people that are supporting them. It helps to have training, but Randall thinks it is also valuable to just jump in and try things. She recommends a class at the University of Oregon called "Building Capacity for Change," taught by Dianne Ferguson. It teaches how to adapt curriculum for all children, whether they have IEPs or not.

"I believe in inclusion," said Randall:

> I'm pretty passionate on the subject. I think it's important for the kids being included and for the regular kids as well. I think it helps teach tolerance in society and we don't have enough of that. These kids I've had will never be afraid of people with disabilities. When they grow up, if they're still living in Cottage Grove, they'll walk up and say, "Hi Kelli!" if they see her on the street. Hopefully it will make them tolerant of all kinds of people—anybody who is different than the norm.

## Eugene Public Schools

While Eugene makes no claims to being a fully inclusionary district, Cindy Stults, coordinator of the district's educational support services, said that the district has made great strides toward becoming more inclusionary. "Above all, we're committed to offering a continuum of services for youngsters," said Stults. "We look at each individual child and see what's appropri-

ate. The most important thing is to understand the child and the child's needs and go from there, not necessarily fitting the child into a program that exists. That's just not the way we do things here."

This large district serves approximately 19,000 students in four high schools, eight middle schools, and thirty-two elementary schools and programs.

Sue Subbot, chairperson for the district program that serves students with severe physical disabilities, has a long-term perspective on the district's evolution toward inclusion. She has worked in the district since 1973. That's before passage of P.L. 94-142. Talk about changes! In many ways, Subbot has been an inclusion pioneer.

When she began her teaching career, Eugene and Portland were the primary areas in Oregon where children with severe physical disabilities could attend school. Many of Subbot's students came from other parts of the state. Parents placed them in Eugene foster homes so they could take classes at the Children's Hospital School, located in the Easter Seal Building. More often than not, this was the first school they'd attended. "It was a good school," Subbot recalled. "The problem was, it was separate."

On a courtesy basis, Dunn Elementary School agreed to let some of the children participate in classes and activities there. That was in the early 1970s. Subbot spent time educating students and staff at Dunn about various disabilities and how they could help the new students. They produced packets of information, for example, on spina bifida and cerebral palsy. They also taught sign language to able-bodied children.

As acceptance grew, everyone involved felt increasingly comfortable with disabled students' being in regular-education classrooms. Subbot and her colleagues set up a room at Dunn where they taught reading and math to mixed groups of disabled and general education students. It was a way they could integrate and give something back at the same time.

This program was so successful Subbot and her fellow staff members decided it was time to see if they could move students back into their home schools. Assuming the role of transition specialist, Subbot traveled throughout the state, paving the way. She was part of a team that went to home-school sites to present who the student was and what the needs were. The team helped schools problem-solve to make the physical changes needed to serve the students. With the passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975, schools were legally required to serve these students. "That changed things dramatically for those kids," said Subbot.

In the Eugene School District, Laurel Hill School, and later Willagellespie, became regional sites for students with severe physical disabilities. Many were bused in from smaller outlying districts.

"Now we only have one school site like that," said Subbot. "Our focus

has been to get kids back into their home schools." For the most part, instruction and specialized help take place in the general-education classroom, with disabled students working alongside general-education students.

"I'm really proud of what the Eugene School District has done on behalf of students with physical disabilities," said Subbot. "They stepped forward long before they legally had to. There's a strong commitment to solving problems before they arrive."

Laying adequate groundwork is an important key to success. Before placing a student with a significant disability in a school, staff members do what they can to get the school ready. Typically they talk with the student and his or her family—see what they want to happen. Then they talk with staff members who will be working with the student, and talk to the class the student will be entering. If the student has cerebral palsy, for instance, they will talk to the class about cerebral palsy, then introduce the student as a local expert. "There's just no reason not to acknowledge that we all have differences and we have to figure out how to work with them. I think that helps create a more accepting world for everybody," said Subbot.

Subbot gained further appreciation for the progress her district has made when she traveled to Moscow as a consultant a year-and-a-half ago. She found that in Moscow there is still no accessible public transportation for persons with physical disabilities. Children with severe disabilities stay home and have a teacher that comes to them. Schools for the mentally retarded are separate. " 'Defectology.' That's what they call special education there," said Subbot.

Until two years ago, mildly disabled students were served primarily in resource rooms, said Stults. They were mainstreamed for selected activities—typically music, lunch, recess, and PE. Students with more severe disabilities were in self-contained classrooms.

In this district, the push for more inclusionary education came from the bottom up, noted Stults. "Nobody said, 'OK teachers, we're going to include students with disabilities more'." The impetus to change came from a groundswell of individual teachers and parents who were becoming more aware of the possibilities and asking for what they thought was best for their children. But the district has been supportive, providing inservice training and services as needed. "In some schools, the principals lead; in others, the principals are indifferent," said Stults. For principals and teachers without knowledge and training in the special-education field, there is fear of not doing it right and failing.

All students with mild disabilities are now based in regular classrooms, with support and accommodations in learning centers. The District's Learning Centers now serve a wider range of student needs, from mild to moderate. Students are integrated into the regular school programs as appropriate.

All schools have a learning center, and everyone in the building sees himself as supporting disabilities. Eight of the learning centers are regional. They serve the whole district. Six have a cognitive focus. Two have a behavioral focus.

Each learning center has at least one special-education teacher and one or more instructional assistants. The learning-center staff serve as consultants, skill-development trainers for teachers, support persons in regular classrooms, and direct instructors. "None of our programs looks exactly alike," said Stults. "Some schools predominately provide services in pullout. Others understand the long-range effects of removing students from the regular classrooms. Sometimes they just check in with students and their teachers at the beginning and end of the day to see how things are going."

Stults says it's important to consider that you're dealing with a whole child. She remembers teaching in a high school resource room in the 1970s, when the district was beginning to serve increasing numbers of special-education students.

> I had youngsters who came to high school without ever having had any science. They were getting pulled out for a second shot of reading, a second shot of something else. They were receiving lots of basic-skills instruction, but had very little exposure to the general knowledge base. Students need to learn about their world and their community—to discover what society thinks is important, to find out what jobs and hobbies they're interested in.

Stults sees many other benefits in the trend toward inclusion.

> Our education system as a whole is getting stronger by having youngsters included who weren't included before. Teachers are seeking help to meet these new challenges, developing a larger and more sophisticated toolbox, if you may. That's going to benefit future youngsters whether they have a disability or not. When parents are school-shopping, looking for the right placement for their child—we can tell them, "We've done this. We know how to handle it. We're good at it."
>
> For the individual youngsters with disabilities, it has widened their social networks and broadened their academic horizons. When we provide them with a broader education, we're finding out that their interests are different than we thought.

And the benefits don't end there, said Stults. "Teachers and nondisabled students are becoming more accustomed to working with diversity. The climate is more accepting now. People are willing to say, 'How do we make this work?' "

## Buckingham Elementary School
## Bend-LaPine School District

Superintendent Scott Mutchie says he became interested in inclusion after some of his special-education staff attended a conference in Canada about four years ago. They came back well informed about the current and best practices for dealing with students with special needs. Inclusion sounded to him like the direction for the district to go.

Mutchie has a master's degree in special education and worked for many years as a teacher of learning-disabled students. Perhaps that explains his readiness to move special-needs students into regular classrooms. After talking with the school board, he gave his staff the go-ahead to move toward inclusion.

"You can't be wishy-washy about it," said Mutchie. "Number one, I was supporting it and saying, 'Let's do it.' Number two, we're going to have to find some time to help people make these changes. Number three, I helped out by mediating conflicts between special-education and regular teachers."

Mutchie advises setting timelines for change but accelerating or decelerating the augmentation as needed. "You can't take one plan and adapt it to seventeen different schools. If you define it too tightly, and it's too rigid, then you're trying to fit a round ball into a square hole and it's not going to work."

### District Mission Statement

In June 1992, the Bend-LaPine School District amended its mission statement to read:

> Equal educational opportunities and treatment shall be provided to all students. No student legally enrolled in the district shall, on the basis of age, disability, national origin, race, marital status, religion or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the aids, benefits or services of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity provided or authorized by the district.

Diane Hensley, director of special education for the Bend-LaPine School District, said the district strives for full-service schools where all children with their unique gifts and unique challenges are welcome. "We believe this model is helping to raise a new generation of caring, compassionate leaders and citizens."

Mutchie empowers his principals to come up with their own schemes for implementation. He particularly enjoys having a principal convince him of the worth of a plan. The plan Marion Morehouse came up with for the 1994-95 school year was one of the most unique.

**Buckingham Elementary School**

As principal of Buckingham Elementary School (enrollment 628), Morehouse embraced the inclusion mandate wholeheartedly. Major restructuring was already in progress in 1991, with implementation of multiaged classrooms, in the wake of Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century. "The inclusion idea was kind of exciting to me," said Morehouse, "because at many of the schools I'd been, they kept the severe students in a special classroom."

At the beginning of the 1991-92 school year, Buckingham was still serving all the physically and mentally handicapped elementary-age students in the district. Mike Reeves was the teacher in charge of the resource room where these special-needs students received their education. Reeves worked with his staff of educational assistants, training them to meet the needs of special-education students in the regular classroom. Then he began talking to the regular-education teachers. He offered them a deal. Any teacher who took one of his special-needs students got an educational assistant too. The EA would then be available to work with all the students in the classroom, not just the student with an IEP. By the end of the year, all students had been placed in regular classrooms.

Morehouse worked with consultants to be sure he was doing everything necessary for successful transition. Recognizing the need to help teachers adapt and plan together, he got grants from the PTA and the Oregon Department of Education to pay for substitute teachers, allowing the teachers release time without cutting teaching days. He hired a pool of regular substitutes so they'd be familiar with the children. While teachers did collaborative planning in groups of three, the PTA put on presentations to students in their three classrooms. Water, trees, and rain forests were some of their topics.

The school board authorized additional release time, five-and-a-half days a year. Some of the time was spent retraining teachers in the creation of performance tasks and cooperative-learning strategies. The rest was spent in actually collaborating to create lessons and units using this new knowledge. Adaptations and modifications for disabled students were an integral part of the planning process.

"Lack of teacher training is where it fails," said Morehouse. "If teachers don't have adequate training, then they tend not to support inclusion to the parents."

In spring 1991, some teachers attended seminars about the process of change. Others made visitations to observe fellow practitioners at schools more advanced in restructuring. Teachers and administrators dialogued with parent and community groups about proposed changes.

In fall 1991, Buckingham opened with fourteen multiage classrooms, including six 1-2, two 2-3, three 3-4, and three 4-5 multiage combinations.

Single-grade options were also available, one each in grades K-4, and three at the fifth-grade level. Students in multiage classrooms typically have a wide span of skills and abilities. Students with disabilities, therefore, don't stand out as much.

At the same time, Buckingham began holding monthly ParenTalks, as the staff sensed a need to raise the level of educational awareness with parents and the community.

**Division into 'Ranches'**

Changes at Buckingham didn't stop there. This school year (1994-95) the school was divided into four smaller schools or "ranches." The staff might have called them learning communities or neighborhoods as other schools have, but since members of the student body are called Broncos, ranches seemed appropriate. These smaller schools allow teachers and students to get to know everyone in their ranch. Teachers are grouped together by similar teaching styles.

Each ranch has five classrooms. Two of the ranches are identical, with two first-second blends, two third-fourth blends, and a single-age fifth grade. One ranch has a single-age first grade, a single-age second, two third-fourth classrooms, and a single-age fifth grade. The fourth ranch is all single-age classes, closer to traditional classrooms. The ideal is that each child will stay in the same ranch for the full five years. Parents can choose the ranch they think will work best for their child, and they can place siblings in the same ranch or different ranches. Class size is twenty-six.

Every three rooms are joined by bifold doors. Sometimes students move back and forth between classrooms. Morehouse said that he's observed some of the teachers becoming good buddies, developing lessons and learning centers and then sharing them.

Textbooks no longer form the subject matter core. While students may be working on the same topic, their assignments often differ, so students with special needs aren't singled out. Most rooms have their own minilibraries with information at all levels on many topics, and the main library is at the hub of the school. It's open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Teachers can send kids to the library any time to gather information or use the computers.

Each of the two reading teachers covers two ranches. They pull kids out of classrooms to work with them at little kidney-shaped tables scattered around the school in hallways and in conference rooms. If you go to a table where kids are working, you'll find that some of the kids are on IEPs and some just need extra help. The two special-education teachers and the educational assistants work with kids on IEPs right in the classroom. They, too, often include mainstream children in their groups. The speech therapist may

work with students in her office, or in any of the other teaching locations.

Volunteers also play a major role. Many parents volunteer, as do juniors and seniors from the high school—older students who are thinking about being teachers.

Morehouse said that in this model special-needs kids attend their neighborhood schools and are treated just like everyone else.

> In the old days, they spent their days in their own room. They never had any contact with the regular kids as role models. We didn't see much growth in their social skills. Now, academically I'd be hard-pressed to say that they do better, but we do see them have better social skills. You see them working with the regular students, and the good news is, regular students working with them. It's heart-warming to see them fighting about who gets to take Kate to the lunch room, or out to recess.

## Lynch View Elementary School
## Centennial School District

Major change began here in 1990. That summer, Susan Coady, Lynchview principal for the past five years, and a team of teachers including the special-education teacher took part in the state-sponsored inclusion conference in Bend. On their return, they got the staff thinking and talking about how to begin more fully integrating special-needs children into regular classrooms.

At that time, Lynch View served all the district's students with severe learning disabilities in grades 1 through 3. Students identified with high special needs in grades 4 through 6 attended another school in the district. These special-needs students spent most of their day in the resource room, but were mainstreamed for physical education, music, lunch, and recess.

In the summer of 1991, the same special-education teacher returned to the conference, this time accompanied by another group of regular-classroom teachers. They came back inspired and enthusiastic about making changes.

As in many other schools, the move toward full inclusion at Lynch View went hand-in-hand with a more general restructuring. The 1991-92 school year began with a pilot program of five multigraded classrooms. At the same time, the special-education teacher asked classroom teachers if they'd be willing to include some of the students from the resource room in their classes for half days. The teachers who agreed to give it a try asked if they could keep the resource-room students all day for the first three days, so the kids could learn the rules along with the rest of the class. At the end of the three days, they wanted to keep their new students full-time. "Teachers here were willing to try new things that they thought would work for all children," said Coady.

That was the beginning. The next school year, 1992-93, the whole school went to multilevel (two or three levels combined) classrooms. The students who had been specially placed at Lynch View went back to their home schools. Students who lived in the neighborhood remained at Lynch View where they were integrated into regular classrooms. The special-education teacher stayed on, working with teachers in the classrooms and serving as a resource.

The 1993-94 school year marked the closing of the resource room. The special-education teacher became a classroom teacher and the learning-disabilities teacher assumed the role of building consultant, working in the classrooms with teachers and students. A special-education consultant from the Multnomah County ESD began coming to the school half a day per week. Part of her focus has been to conduct workshops for teachers and to give teachers ideas on how best to meet the needs of specific children.

Classroom teachers who have special-needs children in their classes are given opportunities to go to workshops that will help increase their effectiveness and help them collaborate, usually in small groups of three or four. The learning-disabilities specialist is also available to help brainstorm ideas for solving problems or meeting the challenge of teaching to children with a wide span of abilities.

When teachers need help in dealing with a difficult situation, they usually talk with parents first. Then they may talk about the situation informally with other members of their own teaching team. If the problem isn't resolved at this level, they bring it to the teacher-assistance team—a group of teachers set up for this purpose. There they discuss the problem, go over what has been tried, and come up with new strategies.

Parents are always involved, and always asked permission if specialists are going to make observations or do additional testing or evaluation. If the teacher and parents decide that the student needs more help, the problem goes to the multidisciplinary team, a team of specialists that could include the speech teacher, the school psychologist, the counselor, the social worker, and the principal. This team can make recommendations for services or changes in placement.

"Any teacher here would tell you that the key to the success of inclusion is support—they don't feel like they're alone," said Coady. "They feel they have someone to talk to and problem-solve with. The support people work in the classroom with the teachers." Coady believes that going through a transition year was also crucial to the plan's success. The special-education teacher was there to support the classroom teachers in this new endeavor. She still had a classroom where she would sometimes pull in a few of the special-education kids along with their classmates.

Musing on the benefits of inclusion, Coady said the picture that comes

to mind is of a little autistic boy. When he first came to kindergarten a few years ago, he didn't talk or interact. Now he's beginning to talk and participate in some activities with his classmates.

> Socially, some of the kids who were identified for pullout programs are involved with classmates in a regular classroom. Our children are learning tolerance. They take pride in their ability to help others and they are learning compassion. Children differ in appearance and abilities, and we are teaching them to learn to accept and live with each other.

"To make inclusion work, teachers have to be supported," said Coady, "and school staffs have to learn to work together. You have to have leadership that helps move people through it. You have to accept the teachers where they are and accept the kids where they are, and help them make the changes."

## Ontario School District

The Ontario School District is situated amidst range and farm land on the Oregon-Idaho border about halfway up the state. It serves approximately 2,800 students in 8 schools—6 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school.

In 1988, the following mission statement was developed by a committee of fifty townsfolk, administrators, teachers, and students:

> The primary mission of the Ontario School District is to ensure equal access to an excellent educational program in an integrated environment. All students will be given the opportunity to reach their highest potential as productive members of society.

In this district, the major impetus for moving the district toward full inclusion came from the top down, recalled Ron Guyer, director of student services. Superintendent Dave Cloud attended the McGill Insitute in Montreal, Canada, in summer 1989, under sponsorship of the Oregon Department of Education. There he studied with George Flynn, the superintendent of a large Canadian school district that had been including all students in regular classrooms for four or five years.

All but the really severely disabled had been attending classes in Ontario neighborhood schools since 1977. If students were labeled TMR, they were placed at a separate school. If students were learning disabled, they were placed in a resource room for a small portion of the day to receive special instruction, which in many cases had no correlation to the instruction that was taking place in the regular classroom. The rest of the day, they were mainstreamed, which meant they were in the regular classroom with no

support to accommodate their special needs. "It was sink or swim," said Guyer, "and most of them sank."

Language differences were also a factor that created diverse learning abilities. Approximately 30 percent of the students are Hispanic, 10 percent Asian, and a sizable population is Basque. Special services were delivered by label—learning disabled, educably mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, migrant, hearing impaired, vision impaired, and so forth. The services a child received depended on his or her label. Programs for the varied categories of severely disabled were spread out all over the county. "It had evolved so we were doing what was most convenient for the adults," said Guyer. "We had parades of buses going up and down the highways."

Another problem was that building-level staff had no control over special education. That changed when Cloud, then the new superintendent, introduced the concept of site-based management. He gave principals authority over the allocation of special-education money. Special-education teachers began feeling a sense of unity with the rest of the school, since all staff members in each building were now part of the same team.

At the beginning of the 1989-90 school year, Superintendent Cloud began encouraging his principals to look for ways to move inclusion, or supported education, beyond the labels, and beyond just kids with disabilities. He envisioned a school where all children, with and without labels, could receive the support they needed to succeed. During that year, a $1 million bond issue passed with monies tagged to making all schools accessible to children with disabilities.

**School Board Backs Inclusion**

Cloud knew how important it was to get the school board behind inclusion, both philosophically and financially. In the 1990-91 school year, he took school board members on a visit to Lincoln County where they observed inclusive classrooms in progress and talked with staff members. By fall 1991, all students, with the exception of twelve TMR students, were attending their neighborhood schools.

Costs were one of the biggest obstacles to change. Funding for most of the educational assistants came into the district by category: migrant aide, special-education aide, TMR aide, Chapter 1 aide, and so forth. Each of five different federal funding sources had its own set of specific guidelines for aides. The Malheur ESD managed related services for all students on IEPs and all services for the TMR population. They also received most of the funding for the students they served.

Guyer said that initially the ESD resisted the proposed changes. The district decided to move ahead anyway, integrating special-education students into regular classrooms, with or without ESD funding.

With his superintendent and school board squarely behind him, Guyer met one-on-one with the parents of special-needs students to share the district's vision. "Our vision was of a school district where children on IEPs could go to school with their brothers and sisters and neighbors. Where we'd begin working on a transition plan from age fourteen on. By the time students left school at twenty-one, they'd be going to a job in the community, banking their money." Parents knew what was planned through the ESD—segregated schooling culminating in placement on a waiting list for placement in a sheltered workshop.

"After talking to all the parents and giving them the choice, we took 85 percent of the students out of the ESD program, which was 100 percent of the students from Ontario," said Guyer. Monies from reduced transportation needs helped defray some of the expense for increases in support staff. The ESD staff kept their programs running for two more years, convinced that disillusioned parents would re-enroll their children. None from Ontario returned. Eventually, through negotiations, the Ontario School District tapped into 90 percent of that ESD money. Special services provided by the ESD are now delivered at the schools, and it's the support people who spend time traveling from site to site.

**Staffing Changes**

Prior to the 1992-93 school year, the district negotiated an agreement with the classified union that resulted in similar pay for all Instructional Assistants (IAs). Duties changed as well. IAs can now be utilized to support students throughout the school, label or no label. Principals decide how they are to be used. IAs and their supervisors received training on the guidelines and regulations tied to each of the eight funding sources. This allows IAs to record their time in the various categories, while offering the schools flexibility in serving a broader spectrum of students. The accounting office sorts it all out in the end, for reimbursement from state and federal sources.

Instructional assistants weren't the only ones whose roles changed. Regular-classroom teachers had to learn how to integrate severely disabled students into their classes, and special-education teachers found themselves transformed from instructors to support specialists.

There has been a major increase in staff development since the move to full inclusion began. Teachers had more inservice days added to their contracts so they could attend workshops and meetings. Workshops have dealt with issues such as multilevel instruction, collaborative planning, strategies for development of peer friendships, strategies for handling behavior problems, and cooperative learning. Teachers attend team meetings, IEP meetings, meetings with parents (sometimes in the home), and meetings with

various support specialists. Teachers at the middle and high schools now have extended (eighty-minute) preparation periods once a day, which can be used for meetings and collaborative planning

Fully 80 percent of the former special-education teachers have now become regular-classroom teachers or left the school district. Those who still call themselves special-education teachers spend most of their time as support specialists, working with the regular-classroom teachers, participating in team meetings, and checking on kids to see that their needs are being met.

Last fall, Dave Cloud left Ontario to become superintendent of the Roseburg School District. Guyer said that many people thought supported education, or inclusion, would end when Cloud left. "One of our principals, who had done the best job of including students under Cloud's tutelage, was Mike Taylor," said Guyer. "Mike became our new superintendent and we haven't changed our course at all."

"You can't really look at inclusion by itself," said Guyer. "We believe it's a part of the school-reform issue. It's not just a way to deal with special-education students. It has to be part of a total belief and practice of a school. It goes part and parcel with the belief that our responsibility is to all students."

Thinking about inclusion brings a certain student to Guyer's mind. To protect her anonymity, we'll call her Patti. Five years ago, when Patti first entered school in the Ontario School District, she spent her days sitting in a wheelchair, drooling. Diagnoses from several psychologists concurred—she was incapable of learning to walk or talk. During that first year in the regular classroom, she got out of her chair and tried to hop. The second year she was using a walker. The next year she began walking unassisted. Now a fourth-grader, Patti can make her way to the playground and back by herself, and she has begun to utter words. The other students accept her. Her parents have been astounded at her progress.

"We want these kids to be part of the student culture versus a group of kids that we want to help," said Guyer. "We've had kids significantly retarded that previously didn't attend their neighborhood schools. They'd go to church, or anywhere else in their neighborhoods, and have no friends. After moving back to their neighborhood schools, they've become managers of ball teams. Maybe their job is to get the towels, but now they feel included."

*Chapter 5*

# Issues of Funding

No statewide statistics exist comparing the costs of inclusive education to segregated teaching. The Center for Special Education Finance (CSEF) does have such a document in the works, planned for publication in the spring of 1995.

CSEF is the source of most of the information in this chapter. Based in Palo Alto, California, it was established in 1992 to address fiscal issues related to the delivery and support of special-education services to children throughout the U.S.

Before passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) in 1975, states received a lump sum for each child from age 3 to 21. Because financial restraints were identified as a key factor in the underservice of disabled students, the allocation of extra federal funding for special education was a key component of the act. At the time, the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare stated that it believed the simple pass-through of funds based solely on the population of the local educational agency failed to provide an adequate incentive for serving all children.

The act's formula provides that states may receive up to 40 percent of the national average expenditures for each child with a disability. In fact, federal allocations have never come close to meeting this 40 percent goal. CSEF estimated in 1993 that federal funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (which replaced P.L. 94-142 in 1991) would equal 8.79 percent in 1994.

Nevertheless, the delivery of services to students with special needs has been shaped by this legislation. Because allocations are based on the number of students identified for special education (up to 12 percent of the student population), districts have had a strong incentive to overidentify. Testing is costly. One study reported 22 percent of all special-education funds was spent on assessment. What's more, the methods used to classify students do not necessarily provide information that resource specialists or

regular teachers find useful in developing instructional programs.

CSEF recently polled all fifty states to assess, among other things, their perspective on federal funding policy. By far, the states' greatest concern was the failure of the federal government to meet the early promises of federal support under IDEA. Some states also expressed concern that current federal funding provisions run counter to inclusionary efforts. One common aspect of inclusionary reforms tends to be a reduction in the number of students identified for special-education services.

These reform states believe that a reduction in the count of special-education students is a change for the better. They argue that they are often serving a broader range of students with special learning needs in a less restrictive and more appropriate manner, and that identification for special-education services should be avoided whenever possible. Once labeled, students rarely break out of the special-education system. The system itself can be debilitating for the students, casting a stigma on them that shapes their educational options.

In Oregon, financing for special education underwent a major change in the 1992-93 school year. Before that, districts were required to keep track of all special-education expenditures. They were then reimbursed for 9 percent of those costs. The new state-funding formula provides districts with a flat rate: double the amount that they receive for general-education students. Districts can allocate those funds as they see fit (Walter Koscher 1995).

In making this change, Oregon followed the recommendation of the National Association of State Boards of Education: "State boards, with state departments of education, should sever the link between funding, placement and label. Funding requirements should not drive programming and placement decisions for students" (Center for Special Education Finance 1994).

The wisdom of reforming federal-funding formulas based on a percentage of total students in the state is too complex to explore in depth here. In brief, the basic arguments in favor of reform are that working outside special education is more cost-effective; some students will be better served outside special education; overidentification is now a major issue, and procedural safeguards would remain in place.

Those who oppose changing the formulas for federal funding claim, first, that the system would not be fair to states and districts with higher incidence rates. Second, procedural safeguards cannot be maintained if students are not identified. Third, a retreat from the traditional federal role of fostering and promoting special-education services would occur. Fourth, fiscal accountability would be jeopardized. And finally, current levels of special-education funding would be threatened.

Rather than wait for these changes, Oregon's Ontario School District

has worked out a system that allows principals to allocate instructional assistants as they see fit. Instructional assistants fill out complex timesheets that enable them to report their time in categories (eight funding sources), but the work they do is with all students. The district is willing to share its procedures with other districts that are interested (Ontario School District).

# Conclusion

Nationwide, and statewide, the move toward inclusion is and will continue to be a growing trend. For the most part, parents, educators, children (with and without disabilities), and communities all see great value in more fully integrating individuals with disabilities into public schools and regular classrooms than they have been in the past. Many educators believe that inclusion is most effective when the integration of special-needs students is coupled with a broader restructuring that includes multiaged classrooms.

The most heated resistance is based on two main issues: how inclusion is implemented, and the designation of full inclusion as the only option. Results are most positive where school boards set policy and are supportive, administrators and teachers are enthusiastic, where preparation and support are ample, where people are open to change. The perception in such schools is that all students benefit. But nobody wins when fear and dread prevail or when disabled students are plunked down in regular classrooms with little or no preparation or support.

With regard to placement of *all* students in a general-education classroom as the only option, a plethora of disabilities-advocate groups object. These groups are supportive of more inclusionary practices, but they believe each individual is best served by a placement based on his or her needs. Groups that object to full inclusion believe that it is important to maintain a continuum of services.

While the state of Oregon is not a leader in the movement toward more inclusionary practices, neither is it a slacker. Individual districts span the entire spectrum. Districts that are just beginning to look at changes are perhaps the most fortunate. Many Oregon districts have blazed the trail already. They are proud of their progress and eager to offer inspiration, guidance, and answers to many of the challenges they've encountered in their quest to create inclusionary schools.

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